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Ontario Women's Directorate

NEWS RELEASE

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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT HELPS ABUSED AND AT-RISK WOMEN GET JOBS

New Skills Training Program Lays Foundation For Economic Independence

TORONTO – Minister Responsible for Women's Issues Sandra Pupatello today announced a new $4 million training program that will help vulnerable women develop new skills, find employment, and achieve economic independence.

"Women who have made the difficult decision to leave an abusive situation have told me that one of their biggest concerns – after their personal safety and the safety of their children – is being able to provide for themselves and their families," said Minister Pupatello. "That's why our government is introducing a program that will give vulnerable women the opportunity to develop new skills so that they can get well-paying jobs."

Ten organizations across the province will receive funding over the next two years through the Employment Training Pilot Program to administer and deliver programs offering skills training, education, support and counselling. Each program consists of a three-way partnership between a violence against women group, a training organization and an employer.

George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology in Toronto is delivering one of the programs, a residential air conditioning systems mechanic training program being offered in partnership with Direct Energy Essential Home Services and Nellie's Shelter.

"A good education is an essential factor in helping women become economically independent, and the Residential Air Conditioning Systems Mechanic program is an ideal fit because the skilled trades offer well-paying jobs and flexible employment prospects," said Anne Sado, President of George Brown College Applied Arts and Technology. "Women in this program also will benefit from a learning environment sensitive to their needs as they recover from abuse."

Lee Rose, Direct Energy's Senior Vice-President, Home Services Canada, said, "Direct Energy has a tremendous

Minister Responsible for Women's Issues, Sandra Pupatello gets a lesson from George Brown College student, Viviana Marinacci, on conducting a diagnostic test of a residential air conditioning system. The demonstration was a part of the launch of the $4 million Domestic Violence Employment Training Pilot Program to help women who have experienced or are at risk of abuse develop new skills, find employment, and achieve economic independence.

need for qualified trades people to support our heating, ventilation and air conditioning technician base, which is the largest in Ontario. We're proud to partner with George Brown College and local women's and community organizations to help women build better lives by acquiring a skilled trade."

The pilot training program is part of the government's comprehensive, $68-million Domestic Violence Action Plan, introduced in December 2004.

Other government initiatives to promote women's economic independence and prevent domestic violence include:

- Investing $2.7 million over two years to provide information technology training for low-income women;
- Investing $1.5 million to provide pre-apprenticeship training in the skilled trades for low-income women who are unemployed or underemployed;
- Investing $58 million over four years to provide community services to victims, including counseling and shelter;
- Investing $5.9 million to train professionals to recognize the signs of abuse earlier and give women the support they need; and
- Investing $4.9 million for a public education campaign targeting children and youth and the adults who influence them, to change attitudes and mobilize communities to stop violence before it happens.

"The Domestic Violence Employment Training Pilot Program gives women the opportunity to find sustainable employment and achieve economic security which are important steps for their future and the future of their families," said Pupatello.

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- **Backgrounder:** Government Funds 10 Employment Training Pilot Programs For At-Risk Women

Minister Pupatello is joined by (left to right) Lee Rose, Senior Vice President of Direct Energy, Essential Home Services; Margarita Mendez, Executive Director of Nellie's Shelter; Mandy Bonisteel, Coordinator, Assaulted Women's and Children's Counsellor/Advocate Program and Rolf Priesnitz, Chair Apprenticeship Programs, both from George Brown College of Applied Arts and Technology, at the launch of the $4 million Domestic Violence Employment Training Pilot Program.

Minister Pupatello connects with YWCA of Greater Toronto, a grant recipient through this program - Eva Pakyam, Manager, Employment Programs (left) and Marilda Tselepis, Director, Employment and Skills Development - and one of its project partners, Jen Liptrot, Executive Director, of ACTEW (A Commitment to Training and Employment for Women).

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